



Interoffice Communication

Date: October 3, 2016

To: The President, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Board of Trustees

From: Pamela J. Benoit, Executive Vice President and Provost

Re: Review of Centers and Institute

Vice President for Research and Creative Activity and Dean of the Graduate College, Joseph Shields, has provided materials summarizing the 2015-16 five-year review of centers and institutes.

A summary for each of the reviewed centers/institutes is included with these materials. The resolution requests approval for the following action items to be presented at the October 2016 meeting:

Continuation of Center/Institute:

- Center for Law, Justice and Culture
- Ohio Center for Ecology and Evolutionary Studies
- Quantitative Biology Institute
- Child Development Center
- Academic Advancement Center

Discontinuation of Center/Institute:

- Institute for the African Child

Ohio Center for Ecology and Evolutionary Studies (OCEES)

The Center was established in 2006. The mission of the Center is to advance the knowledge of ecology and evolutionary biology through an interdisciplinary learning and research community, integrating science and technology with undergraduate and graduate education. The Center has 51 faculty members from three colleges and ten departments. Over the last five-year period, the Center has garnered \$350,000 in internal awards and \$3.6M in external grants and contracts. The OCEES' budget is derived solely from direct and indirect costs recovered from externally funded grants.

The largest portion of the OCEES budget goes to supporting graduate and undergraduate research. OCEES' Undergraduate Research Immersion Program (UGRIP) engages between 13-21 undergraduate students each year in a range of research experiences. These experiences include enrollment in a two-hour Research Inquiry & Analysis course, participation in a weekly research seminar series, completion of at least one semester (three credit hours) of directed research courses, and engagement in research (encouraged but optional). The Center hosts several seminars, including the prestigious Darwin and Kitzmiller campus lecture series that are extremely well attended, with attendance exceeding 250 people total for nine seminars over the last five years. During the last five years the Center has increased its overall commitment to graduate student research by providing three, one-semester competitive research stipends.

The review committee notes that the Center continues to be highly successful and has strong viability. The committee makes the following recommendations:

- Given the interdisciplinary nature of OCEES and the College's interest in developing thematic and interdisciplinary instruction, it would seem that the Center might be utilized for an instructional "theme".
- It would be worth considering the allocation of a dual-departmental faculty line for a nationally recognized researcher in ecological and evolutionary biological studies; currently the university does not have a faculty member with this broad expertise.
- In order to ensure the institutional viability of the Center, it is recommended that some form of compensation be established (e.g., course release, summer stipend, or honorarium) for the OCEES director.
- Approximately 5-6 OCEES-active Group 1 faculty have retired, but have not been replaced. This impacts the number of graduate students who can be supported and will likely impact the Center's budget, which is heavily reliant on indirect costs from grants. This a concern that should be addressed.

Dean/VPRCA Comments: As per the Dean, OCEES operates on the direct and indirect funds it generates and has full autonomy regarding its budget and funding priorities. That said, the Dean serves as a resource to discuss opportunities for collaboration; for example, in facilitating hiring across colleges and the possibility of creating a thematic curricular initiative. With regard to faculty hirings, it is noteworthy that five new, tenure-track faculty have been hired by Biological Sciences in the past two years, including several who are doing research relevant to OCEES. The VPRCA agrees with the Dean that the Center supports important interdisciplinary research and education. The Center should be continued.